



Viola Mae

MAY 19, 1925 - DEC 9, 2020



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Viola (Vickey) Buescher's motto might well have been, "pedal to the metal". Vickey was a no stopping, multi-talented firestorm of a modern woman defined by an internal calculus that emphasized hard work and perseverance. It served her well because through her many triumphs she also dealt with challenging obstacles, none of which deterred her, ever. Vickey passed away on December 9, 2020 in Tucson Arizona.

Born on May 19, 1925 in Grand Junction, Colorado to an Italian father, Jim (Vincenzo) Fuoco, and German mother, Katherine Schlegel Fuoco, she witnessed the hard working immigrant philosophy demonstrated by both cultures. She excelled in high school, could sew and create like nobody's business and learned first hand that if you had to pay for piano lessons, you wouldn't squander the time or money spent. At sixteen she had a dance band, fittingly known as "Vickey Fuoco's All Girl Dance Band". During World War II she made \$50 a week playing at area dance clubs for those "gals" left behind at home and the few men who weren't away in service to their country.

She received a scholarship to attend college but her father insisted she stay home and work at his garage which later became the car dealership, Fuoco Motor Company. Eighty-six years later it is still in business. He called her "honey" and she was his right-hand devoted daughter who managed the details of a thriving business. There were obstacles to a woman working in a male dominated industry so in a moment of independence she left for California working for Howard Hughes at Hughes Aircraft Company. Eventually returning home, she once again became an integral part of the family business.

Meeting Bernie Buescher, a handsome Silver Star recipient in WWII, who was co-owner with his two brothers of the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company in GJ, meant her life would change in many ways. They would begin a lovely courtship. Still her



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internal metric of independence and hard work would frustrate their relationship and even delay their marriage. She would tell Bernie she was too busy to marry, the home he bought for them wasn't finished being decorated or she had to complete various tasks, including the monthly bookkeeping for the Catholic church they attended. Her father, and the parish priest finally put down the gauntlet. Her father is quoted as having said, "get married or leave him alone, you are breaking his heart"! Finally, the priest would waive the obligatory marriage announcement in the weekly newsletter. They would get married at the end of the week on June 14, 1947, asap. Having given her first wedding dress to her sister (another delay tactic), she was married in a suit, in a small ceremony at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Afterward, Bernie who was always the romantic, with a sense of hilarity had a sky writer, write "Pepsi Cola" in the sky.

They continued their love affair throughout their marriage getting dressed up for nights out, or throwing parties at home, where Vickey would provide the musical entertainment. Pepsi Cola offered many opportunities to travel the world and while Vickey would protest saying they had to stay home with the children, he would say, "pack your bags", and she did. Bernie and Vickey would have three children, Bernard (sp. Mary Beth Buescher), Marcia (sp. John Mueller) and Cindy (sp. Dr. Michael Parseghian).

Bernie was an avid championship golfer so to fill the time while he golfed, she took her creativity to a new level and taught herself to knit. After her father died and the garage passed to her brothers, she purchased "The Knit Shop" in Grand Junction. She would hand knit 50 dresses, all of Bernie's golf shirts and too many sweaters for friends and family to count. Eventually she designed knit wear for Bernat Knitting Company and became a prolific contributor of original pattern designs to their retail yarn operation.

At 39 years old she was widowed when Bernie had a truck accident far from home. Her life would have singular purpose from that day on - raise her children. She would never remarry. Focusing on her children's well-being was the overriding goal. Always benevolent, she gave each one of her children the gift she could not have herself, a higher education. All three graduated from college, both Cindy and Bernie achieved graduate level educations; for Cindy a Master's Degree at Northwestern and Bernie, a Law Degree at the University of Colorado. Both of them attended



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undergraduate school at the University of Notre Dame. Marcia would attend the University of Colorado graduating with a B.S. in Business and the University of San Diego, studying real estate law. While Marcia was in her junior year of college, Vickey would begin her third career in commercial real estate. Marcia would join her thriving real estate business in 1977 and be mentored by her mother, one of only a few women in the commercial real estate industry in Colorado. A whiz at math and not afraid of hard work she had a reputation for her intellect, ethics and fairness. She achieved the Realtor designation Certified Residential Specialist, for her volume of transactions.

After she retired from commercial real estate she was enlisted to run a senior care facility, Monterey Park. She stepped flawlessly into the role of Administrator overseeing all aspects of senior housing.

Still another tragedy would await her and the family when three out of four of Cindy and Mike Parseghian's children would be diagnosed with Niemann-Pick Type C disease. Cindy and Mike started the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation, based in Tucson and Vickey would spend years as one of the many unpaid volunteers raising money for research. While she was an indispensable contributor to the Foundation's success helping to raise over \$50 million dollars, she also assisted in the day-to-day care of all of Cindy and Mike's children. She became well known in Tucson, for her constant presence with Cindy and also for the 100 lbs. of Christmas toffee she would make each year for the Foundation's many volunteers.

If you asked Vickey what her most significant and proud accomplishment was over her life, it would not be any of her career achievements or community accolades, all of which were outstanding. Without hesitation she would say her best and lasting achievement is that each of her children and grandchildren are good citizens of the world.

Vickey was preceded in death by her husband Bernard A. Buescher: siblings, Mary Green, Earl Fuoco, Vera Gilbert and her three grandchildren, Michael, Marcia, and Christa Parseghian. In addition to her children, Vickey is survived by her grandchildren: Dr. Ara Parseghian (sp. Cicely) Michael Buescher (sp. Leah), Dr. Elizabeth Buescher Lee (sp. Johnnie), Marcia Bunda (sp. Matt), Susan Buescher and Gianna Michael Mueller. She is survived by her sister Katherine Fairchild (sp. Stephen Fairchild), and brother James Fuoco (sp. Afton Fuoco). She was blessed with eight great grandchildren.

Donations in Vickey's honor can be made to the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Fund at 215 Jordan Hall, University of Notre Dame. Notre Dame, IN 46556, <https://parseghianfund.nd.edu/contact/> or to the charity of your choice.



Tribute Wall

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Geraldine Rettig Verano posted:

By reading Viola's obituary, I learned a great deal about her accomplishments during her long life. To me she was my older cousin and since I left Grand Junction in 1953 I only got to see with her on our visits there. She did keep in touch with me over the years and I always looked forward to hearing from her. She was a special person. My sympathy to all, Geraldine Rettig Verano

December 17 at 4:37 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Viola by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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